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243 in favour of rice cultivation. The yield of rice, very much higher per acre than that of wheat or maize, the alternative cereal crops, enables a larger population to live in a restricted area. Furthermore, the climate of Ta Li (though not of the northern Min Chia areas) makes it possible to grow wheat and beans on the rice lands in winter, so that two crops a year can be harvested off the same land. A comparatively small holding of rice land, ten Chinese acres (*mu*) or an English acre and a half, is sufficient to support a family of five persons.[1] Consequently there was little incentive to undertake the cultivation of maize or fruit on the mountain sides while population still remained low, or fresh rice land in adjoining valleys was easily available. When these conditions ceased to apply the tradition of rice farming had secured so strong a hold upon the people that they preferred to emigrate to great distances rather than abandon their manner of life.

243 Other considerations have combined to enhance the
311 value of rice land and reinforce the hold which the "rice
423 standard" has obtained on the Min Chia mind. Since the area suitable for rice is limited, and was long ago brought under cultivation, good land has acquired a scarcity value, and this in turn has been enhanced by the universal will to ownership. The poor seek to buy land even at great sacrifice, the rich regard land purchase as the only safe investment. To be landless is regarded as a grave misfortune, and even to have to rent additional land is considered regrettable. It is of course true that in a community without banks or joint stock companies, land is the best investment, indeed the only really safe one. Land will survive most calamities. Fire may destroy merchandise or a hoard of treasure, and insur-

804 [1] The *Mu* or Chinese Acre by which land all over China is measured, is not, however a fixed unit. The *Mu* varies slightly in every district, and even in different villages. In Yunnan the equivalent of $\frac{1}{3}$ of an English acre to the *Mu* is approximately correct for the Ta Li district.

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243 311 423 ance is unknown. War or banditry may ruin a merchant, but a farmer will probably come through a period of disorder at least with his land intact and sufficient part of the crop to live on. Although public order in western Yunnan is now well maintained, it was not always so; even within the memory of men still quite young the roads were unsafe and one could not venture a few miles from the city without running the risk of robbery.

The peculiarity of the Min Chia system is not therefore the high value placed on land itself, but the exclusive preference for rice lands. If the lack of public security in the past was the only reason for high land values it would apply as much to the mountains as to the plain, indeed perhaps more, for the inhabitants of a mountain district would be too remote to suffer much risk of robbery or pillage at the hands of soldiery. The mountain lands, however, are not regarded as worth anything at all, they are not even owned. The whole surface of the mountain and its lower slopes is public land, or in other words free to all comers, waste, neither subject to rent nor tax. Yet, though certainly useless for rice cultivation, these lands if terraced could grow other crops, and are in fact covered with wild fruit bushes and forest.

The Min Chia therefore revolve in an economic vicious circle of their own making: rice cultivation alone is regarded as worth while, but as the area of suitable land is restricted it has become very valuable, and being valuable is regarded as the most desirable investment, which reinforces the importance attached to rice cultivation. Meanwhile, overlooking the rice plain of Ta Li, is a vast tract of waste land, certainly capable of exploitation, but which, being 438 mountain, the Min Chia farmer entirely ignores. Since the 435 whole of Yunnan, in common with the rest of south China, 511 also produces rice, and for the most part in sufficient quan-

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each of the two meals) it requires approximately 25 *tou* to feed one man for a year, or 125 *tou* to feed a family of five persons. Taking the yield of the *mu* at 12 *tou* per year it follows that the produce of 10 *mu* (1 and 2-3rds English acres) is just sufficient to feed a family of five persons, but allows no margin for other expenditure. As the winter wheat crop also brings in a certain return it is possible for a family to live off 10 *mu*, which is confirmed by the testimony of Min Chia farmers themselves, who state that 10 *mu* is in fact the minimum holding necessary for a family to be self sufficient.

A poor farmer owning only 10 *mu* must however set aside one *tou* of his yield as seed grain, it being calculated that one *tou* of seed grain is sufficient to sow ten *mu*. It follows that most families having only 10 *mu* must in practice rent more land. Rents are paid in kind, at the rate of from five to six *tou* per *mu* of the rice crop and half a *tou* of wheat. Beans are not accepted as rent for the winter crop, wheat rents being calculated at about one tenth of rice rents, although the cash value of wheat is usually about one fifth of the price of rice out of season, and one tenth the price of rice just after the wheat harvest.

Large holdings are unknown in the Ta Li region, but many families have more than the minimum ten *mu*. Holdings of more than fifty *mu* are almost unknown, forty *mu* is the average of the most wealthy, and from this upper limit all gradations down to those who have less than five *mu*, under one English acre, are to be found. These small holdings are explained partly by the long process of subdivision occasioned by the break up of families, partly by the very high price of the land. The best rice land, that lying midway between the mountain and the lake, seils, even since the fall of values after opium suppression, for 200 Yunnan silver dollars the *mu*. At the rate of exchange prevailing before the war with Japan started, the Yunnan silver dollar was worth about

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ninepence, consequently the price of one *mu* expressed in sterling would be £7 10s. 0d. or £45 0s. 0d. per acre. This price means of course very much more in terms of the purchasing power of the Min Chia farmer. Before going further it may be as well as to say something about the currency used in western Yunnan and its equivalent values in sterling. In recent years the wide diversity of currencies in circulation in different parts of China have been abolished wherever the rule of the Central Government became effective, and a standard system of dollars and cents, the dollar being worth in normal times about 1s. 2d., has been introduced. This is called the National Currency. Unfortunately it has only just begun to reach Yunnan where the old chaos of varying currencies still exists, by no means simplified by the addition of yet another. There are in fact now five meanings to the word "dollar" in Yunnan : The National Dollar, the Yunnan Silver Dollar (supposed to be withdrawn from circulation but still in use in remote districts), the new Yunnan paper dollar, worth half a National Dollar ; the Old Yunnan paper dollar, worth only a tenth of the National Dollar ; and the Nickel dollar, of ten nickel cents, which only circulates in west Yunnan, has no actual existence (i.e. there is no such coin) and is worth about three pence. This last, the most local, is in fact the currency in which Ta Li prices are calculated, except for land, which is usually priced in Yunnan Silver dollars. It will be convenient therefore to express all prices in the nickel currency, but the following table of equivalents may be referred to.

YUNNAN CURRENCIES

Exchange rates of 1937

1 $ Nat. = 2 $ New Paper = 10 $ Old Paper	=	1s. 2d. sterling
1 $ Yunnan Silver = 3 $ Nickel	=	0s. 9d. ,,
1 $ Nickel = 10 nickel cents	=	3d. ,,

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434 their land, and thus obtain only half the crop from that por-
511 tion, their surplus for sale or exchange would only be worth
427 £5 os. od. There are many families, about one third of the farming population, in this situation. Perhaps another third have just enough land to live on without renting, and one third, rich peasants rather than landlords, possess a surplus of land which they lease to others.

With these small margins it is obvious that very little trade can be done with the outside world, or even with other parts of the province. Very different was the situation when opium was grown as the winter crop. Opium yielded sixty catties to the *mu* and sold for 6 $ Nickel the catty. In terms of sterling this is 1s. 6d. for one and a quarter pounds. Consequently the farmer realised £4 10s. od. per *mu* for his opium crop, or £27 on the acre. When it is realised that three acres of rice and wheat only yield crops to the value of £20, the consequences of the suppression of opium become plain. The family with three acres, eighteen *mu*, used to raise opium crops to the value of £87 os. od. in addition to their rice crop worth about £18 os. od. To-day all this has disappeared and they are left with the £20 os. od. return on their wheat and rice, of which half is consumed as food.

423 It is remarkable in these circumstances that the value of land has only fallen by one third, a proof of the high value the Min Chia attach to land as such irrespective of the return it gives. It is also curious that when opium was permitted and gave such high returns, no attempt was made to cultivate the poppy on the mountain slopes, where it would grow very well. Even with a cash crop worth four times the value of rice the Min Chia still had their eyes fixed on the rice lands and only grew opium when rice was out of season.

243 The farmer who cultivates more land than he and his fam-
465 ily can work does not always rent it out to others. He may hire labour at a fixed wage of 8 nickel cents a day and also

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the fields, cultivate with the hoe, do most of the transplanting of rice, and assist the men at the harvest. They also bring the harvest back to the homestead. Marketing is usually left to the women who carry loads of produce to the city on their backs, settle down for the day to sell it, and return to the villages in the evening with the proceeds. This work is done both by married women and young girls. The Min Chia women are extremely strong, often doing porterage work which in other parts of China would only be done by men.

Most of the rice land is privately owned, but every village has some public land, usually attached to a temple, which is rented out at the usual rate of half the crop to the tenant and half to the public. The proceeds are used to maintain the village school, which is held in the temple itself, and any surplus may be applied either to some public work such as repairs to the temple, or for the expenses of a festival. The public also have the right of shooting and of hunting over all land, the spoil going to the hunter. This right does not mean very much in a closely cultivated area where game is scarce, and though the same free right of the chase applies to the mountain, the Min Chia make little use of it, partly because the control of fire-arms is strict, a license being required, and partly because they show no aptitude as hunters. The wooded slopes of T'sang Shan are the safe retreat of pheasants, hares, partridges, wild goat, deer, and the animals which prey upon them, wolves, leopards, and possibly tigers.[1]

The neglect of the hunting rights is characteristic of the Min Chia attitude to mountains. The entire area of Ts'ang

[1] No tiger has been reported on T'sang Shan for several years. Leopards are not plentiful, but wolves abound, and raid the farms on the plain for chickens, pigs, and even small children. They never hunt in packs, and will not attack an adult, but show no fear of man when encountered on the mountain.

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The Min Chia townsmen are in fact really members of families who are landowners in the country, while many of the richer merchants have invested their profits in land and become landlords, and moneylenders, in the villages. These families with rural and urban connections can be classified broadly into three groups. Firstly there are small farmers whose land is not sufficient to support the whole family, and who have opened little shops in the city to supplement their incomes. They usually engage in trades such as tailoring, selling ready made clothes, or keep small tobacco shops which also sell straw sandals, string, fruit, and sweetmeats, in other words things which can be made by the women of the family itself and do not require capital. The turnover of such shops is very small, but the women can supply most of the stock and attend to the shop at the same time.

A family named Yang, pronounced "Ya" by the Min Chia are typical of this class. Min Chia by speech and descent they are the younger collateral branch of a widespread family, the senior branch of which is considered wealthy by Ta Li standards. They are thus connected by marriage with most of the well to do families in the city and neighbourhood, both "Chinese" and Min Chia. As is often the case at present, the original holding of land has been sub-divided on the death of the senior members of the last generation so that the share of the land belonging to this branch is only ten *mu*, or less than two acres. They had further suffered, in common with most of their neighbours, very heavy losses when their home, in one of the lake-side villages, was burnt and wrecked by the earthquake of 1925. The parents are both living, but the father, now elderly, suffers from some internal complaint, and is an invalid. There are three sons and one daughter. Two of the sons are adult, and therefore married, the daughter, though now eighteen years old, has not yet married, but will be within a year. The youngest son

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is a schoolboy. This family although now very hard pressed for money belongs to the educated class, and therefore all the sons have been given education up to the middle school grade, and are of course literate in Chinese. The eldest has for some years been a school teacher, in China a very respected and honourable, but badly paid profession, the second son, who is married to the daughter of a much wealthier family, is a secretary in the office of the Garrison Headquarters.

Their land is worked by an uncle, his son and the wives, while the old mother assisted by her daughter (still unmarried), and by the elder sons in their spare time, keeps a tailoring shop in the city which also sells a few ready made clothes. Behind this shop they have a very small town house, but half the family is always in the country village by the lake, and other members constantly come and go, sometimes every day, between the two homes, which are three miles apart. There is of course no other means of transport except walking, unless a mule or a litter is hired, an extravagance which they would not undertake unless in case of sickness. As both the elder sons already have families of young children, and there are only two members of the family gainfully employed (if the microscopic salaries of a teacher and a clerk can be so described), this family is hard pressed. During the planting season and at harvest not only the wives, but also the sons go out and help on the land, and though no stigma attaches to educated people doing rough farm work, it is not usual for them to do it unless the necessity is great.

The second class of family with city and village homes is composed of wealthy farmers who live in the city for comfort. The Wang family, related to the Yangs just discussed, are of this class. The second of the Yang sons is married to a younger daughter of the Wang family, whose land and

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country home is in the next village along the shore of the lake. The two families are intimate and friendly although one is very much wealthier than the other. The Wangs, or "Wa", as they, being Min Chia, would pronounce the name themselves, are large landowners and have official connections. One of their members is now a magistrate in a city of eastern Yunnan, another now living at home, was formerly a magistrate in the same part of the province, and others hold official posts in K'un Ming, the provincial capital. Their country house, rebuilt since the earthquake, is large, well furnished and substantial. Whereas the Yang family have only been able to rebuild a third of their home, the Wang family have also a large house in the city where most of them spend their time, because they find it more lively than the rustic seclusion of their native village.

The third class, of which another family, the Li, are an example, are the city families with investments in land. The Li are Chinese, that is to say they are Chinese on the paternal side, but related on the distaff side to Min Chia families, including the Yang family mentioned above. They do not 'speak Min Chia', they will tell you, although as a matter of fact they understand it quite well if they want to. The family are the chief pawnbrokers of the city and as such considered very wealthy. The late head of the family was a major in the Yunnan provincial army, and the present head of the family served in the army as a captain. This family, being Chinese although long settled in Ta Li (for about four centuries), does not possess any ancestral lands in the country, but as a result of their business operations and the foreclosure of mortgages they do in fact own land in various places on the Ta Li plain. This land of course they rent out, receiving the rice rents in kind, and neither living in the country themselves or having any other connection than ownership with their land.

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Ch'iang

4. Occupations.

463 [423] All Ch'iang are farmers. Even the priests and local rulers have fields which they farm or rent to others. The land, houses, and tools are owned not by individuals, but by families, and all the [462] members of the family cooperate in the work. Men do the plowing, for there is a taboo against women doing so. Men and women cooperate in hoeing, planting, weeding, fertilizing, reaping, flailing, winnowing, husking, wood gathering, etc. Women and girls generally do the cooking, sewing and spinning, and only women weave. There are some blacksmiths, carpenters, masons, and painters, but these are farmers who work also at these trades when there is a demand for their labor. There are no silversmiths or goldsmiths, for silver and gold ornaments are bought ready-made or made to order in a Chinese city. Few if any of the Ch'iang are merchants, although there are Ch'iang homes where matches, vegetable oil, wine, and a few other commodities are sold. Even the priests are farmers who have learned to perform the sacred ceremonies when required.

313 Wood is gathered in the forests on the mountainsides. Groups of men and women and boys and girls often go out and return together, singing as they work. Much of the winter supply is gathered in the fall after the crops have been harvested.

482 All loads, even of water or of wood, are carried on their backs. Families that are poor sometimes supplement their incomes by carrying loads on their backs to Kuanshien and to other distant places.

226 There is little fishing, probably because there are not many fish in the mountain streams. Fishing is sometimes done with a baited hook and line, or by a basket-like trap into which the fish enter and are unable to escape.

224 Nearly all the men enjoy hunting, and some who are expert hunt a great deal. Most of the hunting is done in the late fall and winter after the crops have been harvested. Generally a few men with several dogs cooperate and share the spoils. Leopards, wild boar, deer, mountain goats, musk deer, foxes, pheasants and other game are found. Even monkeys are killed and eaten.

241 When fresh land is desired for cultivation, the trees, brush, and grass in a section of the forest are cut down and burnt. This gives a rich soil for a few years, after which the land may be deserted